

CAREFUL ANTIBIOTIC USE

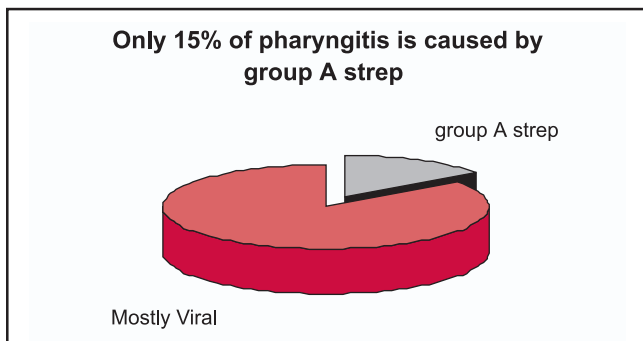
To avoid antibiotic resistance: treat only proven group A strep

PHARYNGITIS

"If you are entirely comfortable selecting which pharyngitis patients to treat 10 days with penicillin, perhaps you don't understand the situation."

- Stillerman and Bernstein, 1961

- **Most sore throats are caused by viral agents.¹**



- **Clinical findings alone do not adequately distinguish Strep vs. Non-Strep pharyngitis.²**

BUT, prominent rhinorrhea, cough, hoarseness, conjunctivitis, or diarrhea suggest a VIRAL etiology.³

- **Antigen tests (rapid Strep kits) or culture should be positive before beginning antibiotic treatment.**

Experts suggest confirming negative results on antigen tests with culture.⁴

Experts discourage treatment pending culture results⁴⁻⁵, but if you do...

- **Make sure to stop antibiotics when culture is negative.**
- **Discourage parents from saving antibiotics.**

If an antibiotic is prescribed:

- **Use a penicillin as treatment for group A strep.⁶**

NO group A strep are resistant to penicillin. Treatment is 90% effective at elimination of strep, and may be higher in the prevention of acute rheumatic fever (ARF). Carriers are at very low risk for both ARF and spreading infection.⁶

- **Use erythromycin if penicillin allergic.**

Remember that most cases with clinical signs of strep, like exudate and adenopathy, are viral.

References

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2. Poses RM, Cebul RD, Collins M, et al. The accuracy of experienced physicians' probability estimates for patients with sore throat: implications for decision making. *JAMA* 1985;254:925-29.
3. Denson MR. Viral pharyngitis. *Semin Pediatr Infect Dis* 1995;6:62-68.
4. American Academy of Pediatrics. Group A streptococcal infections. In: Peter G, ed. 1997 Red Book: Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 24th ed. Elk Grove, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 1997:483.
5. Middleton DB, D'Amico FD, Merenstein JH. Standardized symptomatic treatment versus penicillin as initial therapy for streptococcal pharyngitis. *J Pediatr* 1988;113:1089-94.
6. Shulman ST, Gerber MA, Tanz RR, Markowitz M. Streptococcal pharyngitis: the case for penicillin therapy. *Pediatr Infect Dis J* 1994;13:1-7.